

Conseil scolaire public du Nord-Est de l'Ontario: 2015 - 2016

Project Title	Transforming Teaching and Inquiry-based Learning (Through the Integration of Technology)
Description	<p>Our project has two key goals: improving the teaching practices of our teachers and developing three 21st Century skills in our students: critical thinking, communication, and collaboration.</p> <p>Where our teachers are concerned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are increasing the use of technology in our classrooms;</li> <li>• We are training our people on inquiry-based learning (CFORP);</li> <li>• We are co-planning units of learning with our teachers;</li> <li>• We are co-teaching;</li> <li>• We are doing presentations on various digital resources (apps, programs, sites, etc.);</li> <li>• Knowledge and experience are shared within the school by means of presentations; inquiries come to life during professional activity days dedicated to pedagogy;</li> <li>• Our technology-pedagogy coaches participate in professional learning communities in the schools;</li> <li>• Assessment for learning is advocated (evidence of learning is gathered through observation, conversation, and production; learning results are shared with the students; criteria are developed, etc.);</li> <li>• Pedagogical differentiation is advocated, using the Read and Write program.</li> </ul> <p>Where our students are concerned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We show them different ways to collaborate using technology;</li> <li>• They collaborate using shared documents;</li> <li>• The units that are developed foster an openness to the world;</li> <li>• Self-regulation and independent work are developed through the teaching of research skills;</li> <li>• The students take risks;</li> <li>• There is an improvement in communication (sharing circle);</li> <li>• We develop their critical thinking... research (evaluate resources, sources of information);</li> <li>• There has been a great improvement in student engagement and motivation because they feel that they have some control over their learning.</li> </ul>
Context	<p><i>Number of students:</i> 130</p> <p><i>Number of teachers:</i> 8</p> <p><i>Number of schools:</i> 5</p> <p><i>Grades/Program:</i> Gr.7-8</p>

<p><b>Impact of Learning</b></p>	<p>Through the inquiry-based learning process, we have noted the development of three 21st Century skills: communication, collaboration, and critical thinking. Using collaborative tools (Padlet, Lino, VLE, Office 365) and questions, the students’ prior knowledge is shared and becomes available to everyone.</p> <p>The inquiry process enabled us to ensure that there was pedagogical differentiation in all of the classrooms being coached. The students could choose their approach, their subject of inquiry, and the way in which they demonstrated their learning; however, because they chose a format based their strengths (video, narrative), their particular needs were less obvious.</p> <p>Encouraged to collaborate, the students were more motivated and engaged, which meant that there were fewer disruptions during the day.</p> <p>Accountability was high because the students were part of a team. They did research on a topic of inquiry and then presented their findings to the whole group. This developed their accountability, self-regulation, and ability to work independently. The technology tools also made it possible for them to pursue their inquiry at home and even to collaborate with their partners.</p>
<p><b>Impact on Instruction</b></p>	<p>There were PLC meetings throughout the school year. These meetings facilitated co-planning of co-teaching and co-objectification. During coaching, the technology-pedagogy coaches saw a transformation in the classroom. The use of lecture-format teaching declined and students were seen as active learners. The teachers asked questions instead of transmitting information.</p> <p>Through the PLCs and through participation in a webinar entitled <i>Le processus d’enquête : des élèves actifs et engagés</i> [The process of inquiry: active and engaged students], the teachers had an opportunity to ask questions and develop their knowledge and skills in order to improve their teaching practices.</p> <p>By observing and coaching, we noted several changes in assessment in the classroom. Making use of the technology, assessment by triangulation became commonplace. While the students were engaged in their process of inquiry, we were able to use audio and video to record our observations and gather evidence of learning. OneNote is often the tool recommended by teachers, because authentic traces of learning can be used to assess student learning objectively. This program can also be used to provide instant, personalized feedback.</p> <p>This initiative is encouraging teachers to collaborate on planning and on teaching strategies. This gives them an opportunity to learn how to more fully integrate technology into their practices; transform their planning; share their knowledge; and ask questions in order to help each other evolve and become increasingly effective at implementing the process of inquiry.</p> <p>The teachers are noticing that their role is changing from that of transmitter of knowledge to that of coach and facilitator.</p>

<b>Impact on System</b>	<p>The Board provides a continuous learning environment for all stakeholders: students, teachers, and technology-pedagogy coaches. This atmosphere of trust allows for frank discussion, co-learning by adults, and co-learning by adults and students.</p> <p>Thanks to the success and support of this initiative, it has spread to other classrooms in the schools being coached, and to schools in other communities. Curiosity about inquiry-based learning has contributed to the creation of similar projects in other divisions, e.g., Grades 5 and 6 and Grade 10 Science.</p>
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